27: Munro U-5 (1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23



Observation here was very difficult owing to the curtain, the moving crowd, and the fact that the Ret's most ancient wife would keep on dancing in front of the only possible view.

I therefore moved my position to where I noticed some ancient cronies, who were past the age of reverence and merely inquisitive, and from which place one could see behind the curtain. Shortly after I had moved the Ret's wasir was called for : he was Yomon wad Ker (Kwaniaret). Nyakang was then withdrawn by his attendant backwards and the Ret took his seat on the sacred stool. His wasir then grasped the two front feet of the stool presumably in token of the submission and fealty of the Shilluk race, and in recognition that Nyakang's mantle had descended upon him.

Then occurs much tomtoming and dancing, in which the people concerned are wives of the Ret and people of Akurwa, while the Ret sat like a graven image on the chair. At this time I noticed smoke issuing from the temporary tukls and asked what it was for. I was informed that the Ret's wives were warming water for the ablutions. Presently when this was ready two or three of them came and washed the new Ret's feet in hot and cold water, the significance of which is that the Ret shall be neither too cold nor too hot with his people, i. e. just.

The Ret was then lifted up by the Ororo and carried to where a bull covered with a leopard skin had been brought by Kwa Ujalu[1] on the threshold of his « temporary hut ». He appeared to make certain passes, four in number, over this with a large sword, which was handed to him. The bull was then speared and carried away struggling for a short distance, and the Ret was then taken to his hut, which ended the proceedings temporarily. As we left the scene, the sacred stool was carried past us by four men running and taken up to the Ret's palace on the mound.

I was told Fafiti was to stay in his temporary hut for three days, and at the end of that period is taken up to his palace.

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[1] Kwa Ujalu is probably identical with Kwa Ajal, who were founded by Jal. They live at Nyel Wak and lay out the circle for building the house of Nyakang (cp. Westermann, p. 128 clan list compiled by Rev. D. Oyler of Doleib Hill). Local tradition says they have the right given them by Nyakang of taking captives any girls they may meet and holding them to ransom.